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Message Text

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PAGE 01 NAIROB 01896 051453Z

53
ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 MMS-01 /073 W
---------- 028439
R 051354Z MAR 75
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1730
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
DET 4 AFSCF MAHE ISLAND SEYCHELLES
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 1896

LONDON FOR HAVERKAMP

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PDEV PGOV SE
SUBJ: SEYCHELLES POLITICS AND CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 38095

1. IN COURSE RECENT VISIT BY EMBOFF TO SEYCHELLES, POLITICAL LEADERS OF TWO PARTIES AND SENIOR UK COLONIAL ADMINISTRATORS PROVIDED FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON MARCH 14-27 CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE IN LONDON.

2. IT IS GENERALLY AGREED THAT TWO MOST TROUBLESOME ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED IN LONDON WILL BE SPUP'S CALL FOR FRESH, PRE-INDEPENDENCE ELECTIONS AND RETURN TO SEYCHELLES OF THREE BIOT ISLANDS.
A) NEW ELECTIONS - SPUP HAS BEEN DEMANDING ELECTORAL REFORM AND FRESH ELECTIONS EVER SINCE APRIL 1974 GENERAL ELECTION IN WHICH SPUP POLLED 48 PERCENT OF POPULAR VOTE BUT WON ONLY 2 SEATS OUT OF 15 IN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.
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PAGE 02 NAIROB 01896 051453Z

RENE TOLD EMBOFF HE WILL PRESS FOR INCREASE IN NUMBER OF

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Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

ELECTED MEMBERS FROM PRESENT 15 TO 31 TO BE ELECTED BY
PROPORTIONAL BALLOTING, I.E. EACH PARTY WOULD PUBLISH
LIST OF 31 NATIONAL CANDIDATES, NUMBER ACTUALLY SEATED
WOULD CORRESPOND TO PERCENTAGE OF POPULAR VOTE OBTAINED.
RENE WILL ALSO ASK FOR LOWERING OF VOTING AGE FROM 21 TO 18.
MANY OBSERVERS IN SEYCHELLES, INCLUDING SEVERAL SENIOR
BRITISH OFFICIALS, BELIEVE SPUP WOULD WIN NEW ELECTION
UNDER REVAMPED PROCEDURES. NOT SURPRISINGLY, CHIEF MINISTER
MANCHAM IS DEAD SET AGAINST PRE-INDEPENDENCE ELECTIONS
CLAIMING PARTY THAT WON APRIL 1974 ELECTION HAD RECEIVED
COMMITMENT FROM BRITISH TO FORM FIRST INDEPENDENCE GOVERNMENT
IN SEYCHELLES. WHILE RENE IMPLIED WILLINGNESS GO ALONG
WITH HMG DECISION ON THIS ISSUE, MANCHAM INDICATED CON-
STITUTIONAL TALKS COULD BREAK UP SHOULD BRITISH ORDER NEW
ELECTIONS.

B) BIOT - SPUP HAS MOUNTED VIGOROUS PROPAGANDA
CAMPAIGN OVER PAST SEVERAL MONTHS DEMANDING RETURN TO
SEYCHELLES OF THREE ISLAND GROUPS (ALDABRA, DESROCHES
AND FARQUHAR) WHICH WERE DETACHED IN 1965 TO FORM BIOT
ALONG WITH DIEGO GARCIA, FORMERLY ADMINISTERED FROM
MAURITUIS. RENE (WHO SPENT MUCH OF HIS EARLY LIFE ON
FARQUHAR) WAS ADAMANT ON ISLANDS' UNCONDITIONAL RETURN
ADDING UK REFUSAL COULD FORCE SPUP DELEGATION TO WALK
OUT OF CONFERENCE. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED (NAIROBI 0152),
CHIEF MINISTER MANCHAM, RECOGNIZING LOCAL APPEAL OF THIS
ISSUE, HAS BEEN FORCED TO TAKE PUBLIC POSITION, THUS FAR
LIMITED TO VAGUELY WORDED STATEMENTS ON SEYCHELLES'
RIGHTS IN ISLANDS. MANCHAM SAID HE PRESENTLY UNDECIDED
WHETHER TO ASK FOR FULL RETURN (OR SETTLE FOR AGREEMENT
ALLOWING SEYCHELLES TO EXPLOIT ECONOMIC RESOURCES)
BUT INDICATED HE IS UNWILLING ALLOW SPUP TO CLAIM SOLE
CREDIT FOR THEIR RESTORATION SHOULD THAT APPEAR TO BE
LIKELY.

3. DELEGATIONS - THE MAJORITY SEYCHELLES DEMOCRATIC
PARTY (SDP) WILL HAVE FIVE DELEGATES (CHIEF MINISTER
MANCHAM AND FOUR OTHER GOS MINISTERS) AND EIGHT OBSERVERS.
OPPOSITION SEYCHELLES PEOPLE'S UNITED PARTY (SPUP) WILL
BE REPRESENTED BY TWO DELGATES (PRESIDENT RENE, SEC GEN
SINON WHO ARE SPUP'S ONLY ELECTED MEMBERS OF LEGISLATIVE
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PAGE 03 NAIROB 01896 051453Z

ASSEMBLY). SPUP ALSO ENTITLED SEND EIGHT OBSERVERS.
EACH PARTY PLANNING HAVE PRESENT ITS OWN CONSTITUTIONAL
EXPERT/ADVISOR.

4. TIMING OF INDEPENDENCE - DATE OF INDEPENDENCE WILL
BE ANNOUNCED AT CONCLUSION OF CONFERENCE. POLITICAL
MALEADERS OF BOTH PARTIES HOPE AND EXPECT INDEPENDENCE
WILL BE GRANTED SOMETIME BETWEEN MARCH - MAY 1976.

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